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GB 2237816 A US 4111753 A US 4026286 A

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UK CL (Edition O) B4Q

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(54) Glove Box

(57) The glove box (1) comprises a rigid frame (2) for defining the shape of a glove box. The frame has a first face (3) defining a drum receiving portion (4) which is substantially tubular in shape and a second face (7) defining an outlet (5) which is also substantially tubular in shape. The remaining four faces of the frame are open and a flexible glove bag (6) is shaped to fit over the frame covering the open faces (7) and to be sealingly attached to the frame.

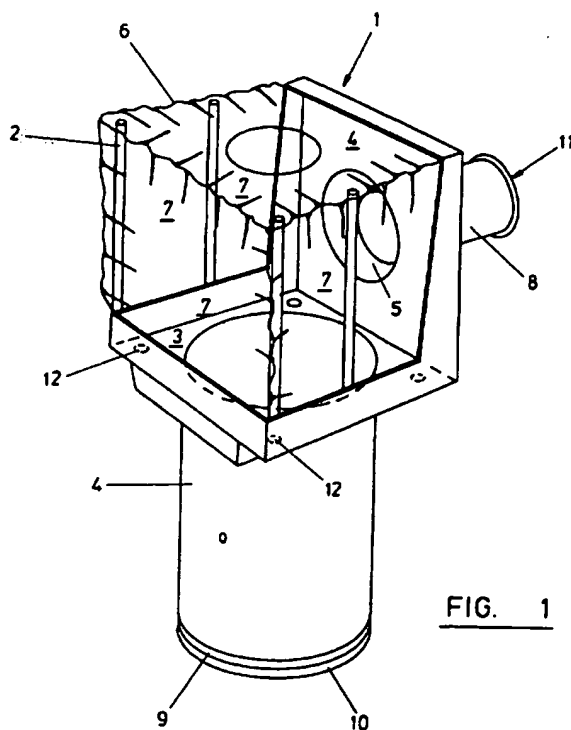
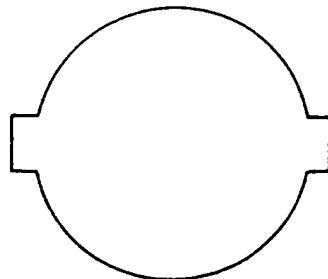
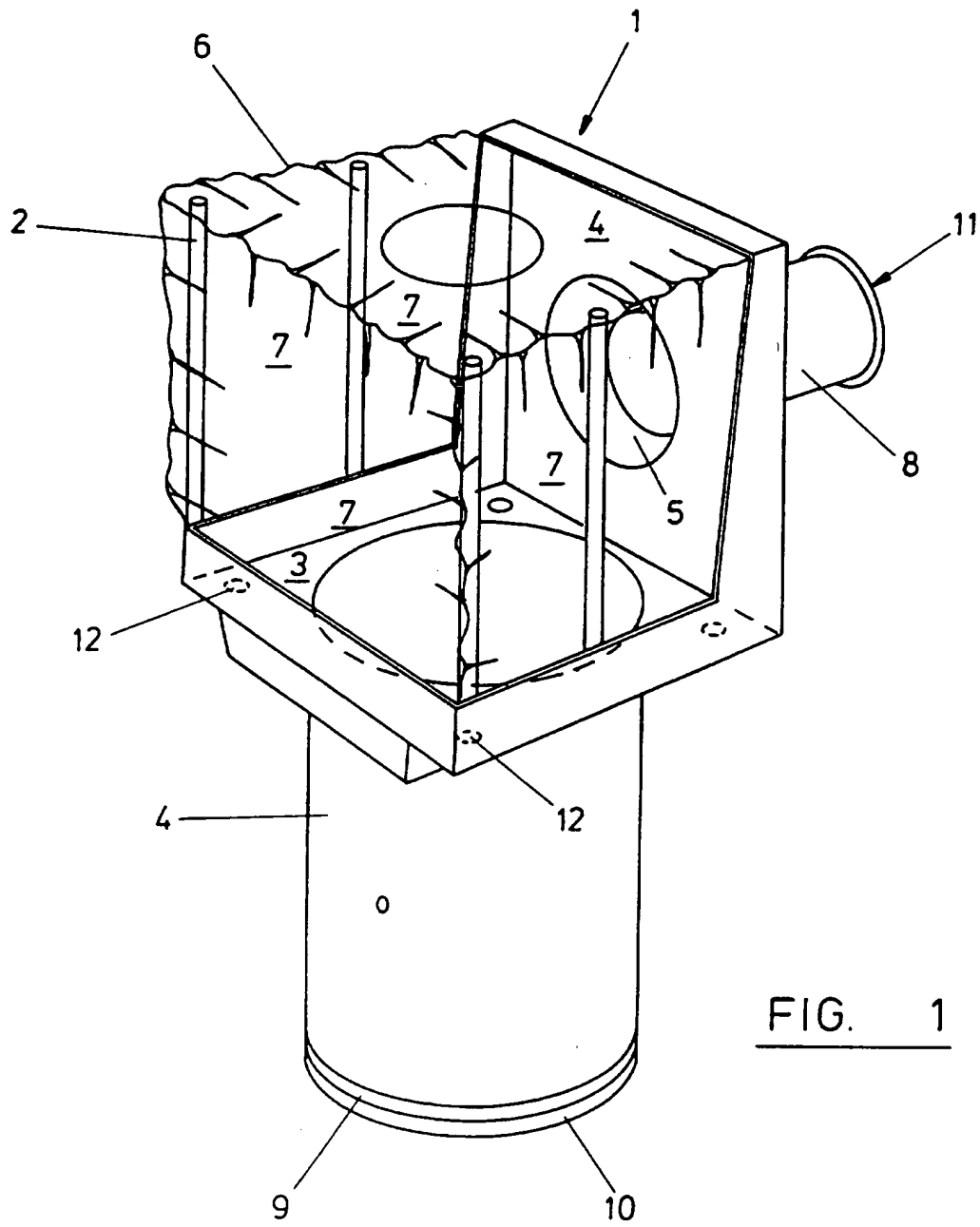


FIG. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy. The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995. This print takes account of replacement documents submitted after the date of filing to enable the application to comply with the formal requirements of the Patents Rules 1995

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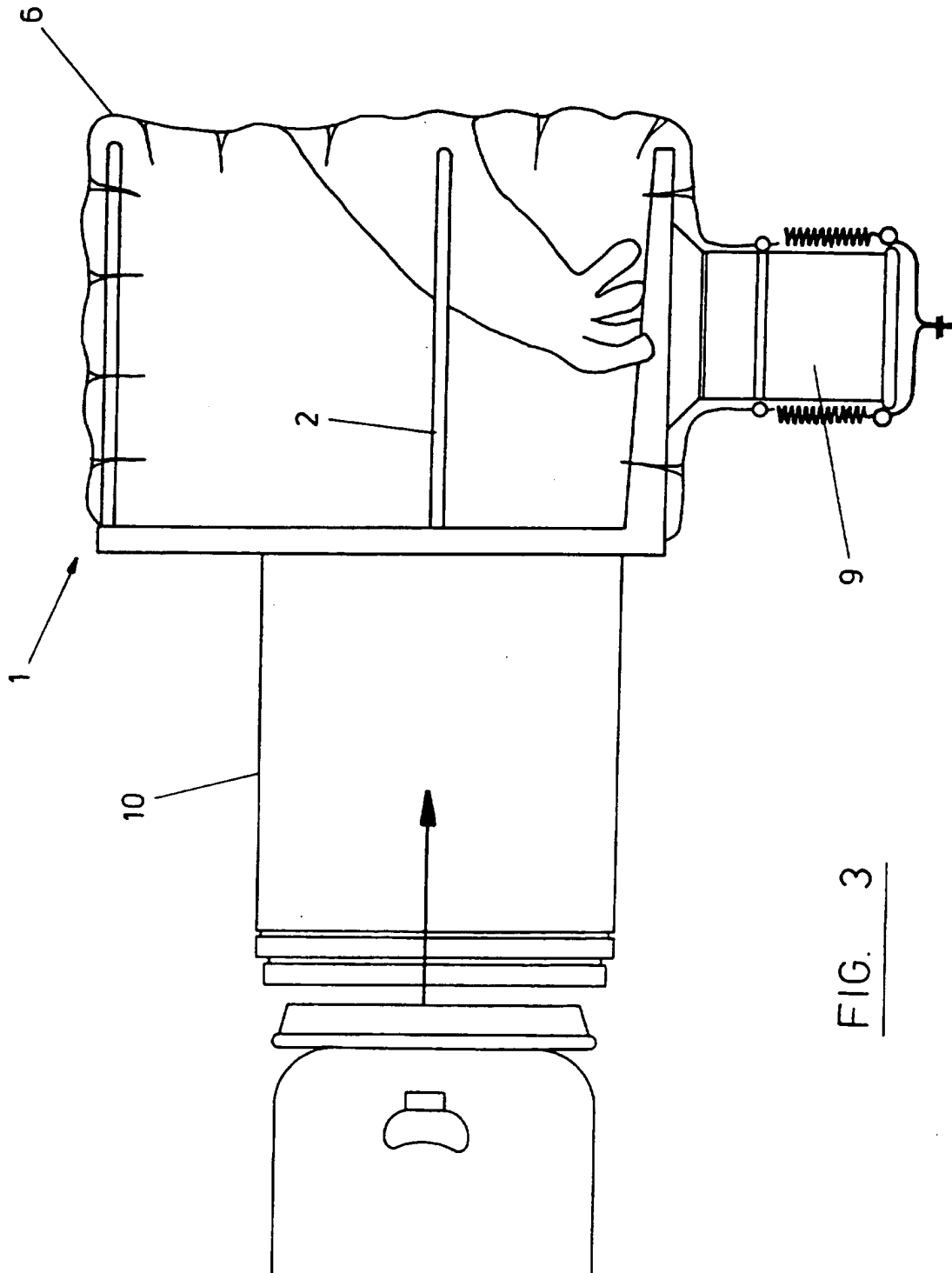


FIG. 3

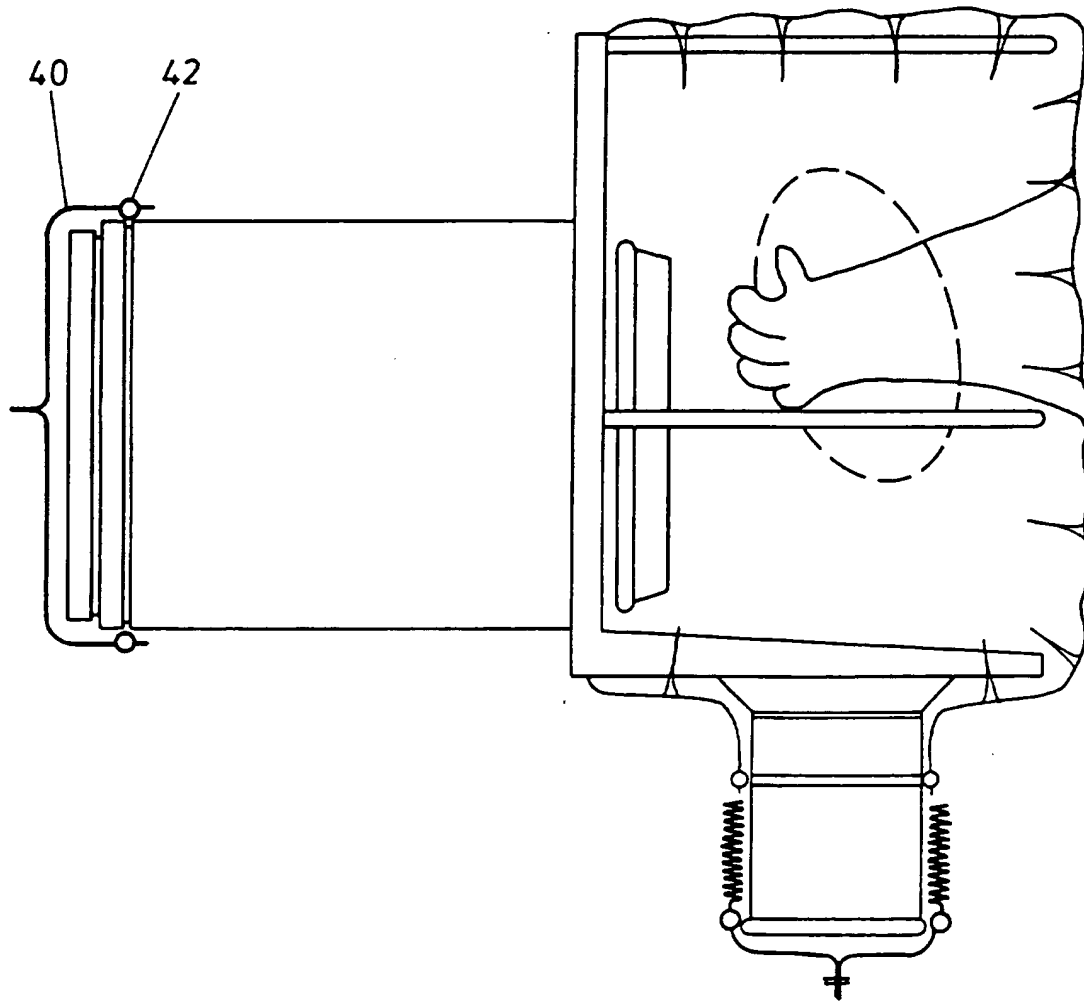
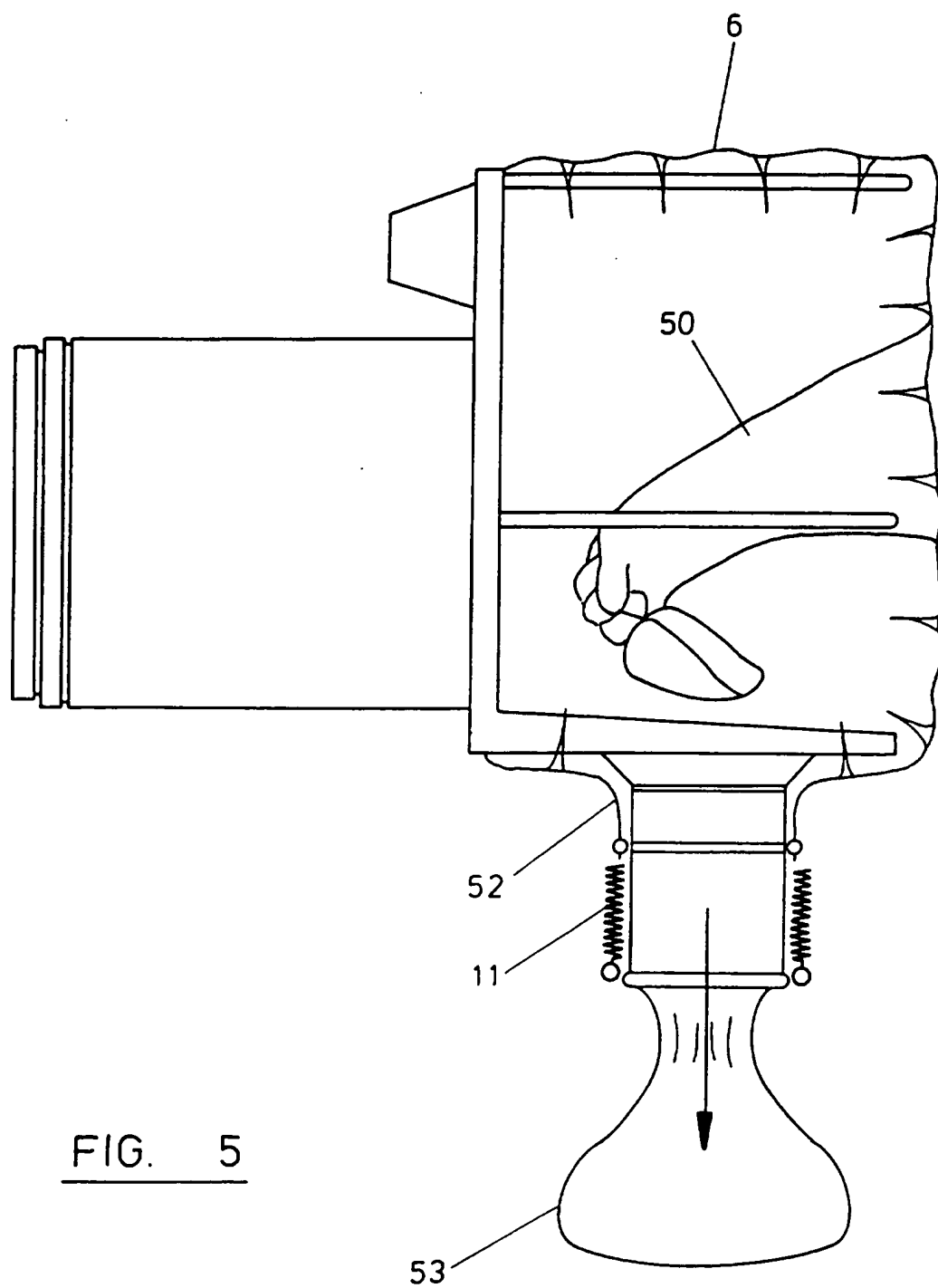


FIG. 4



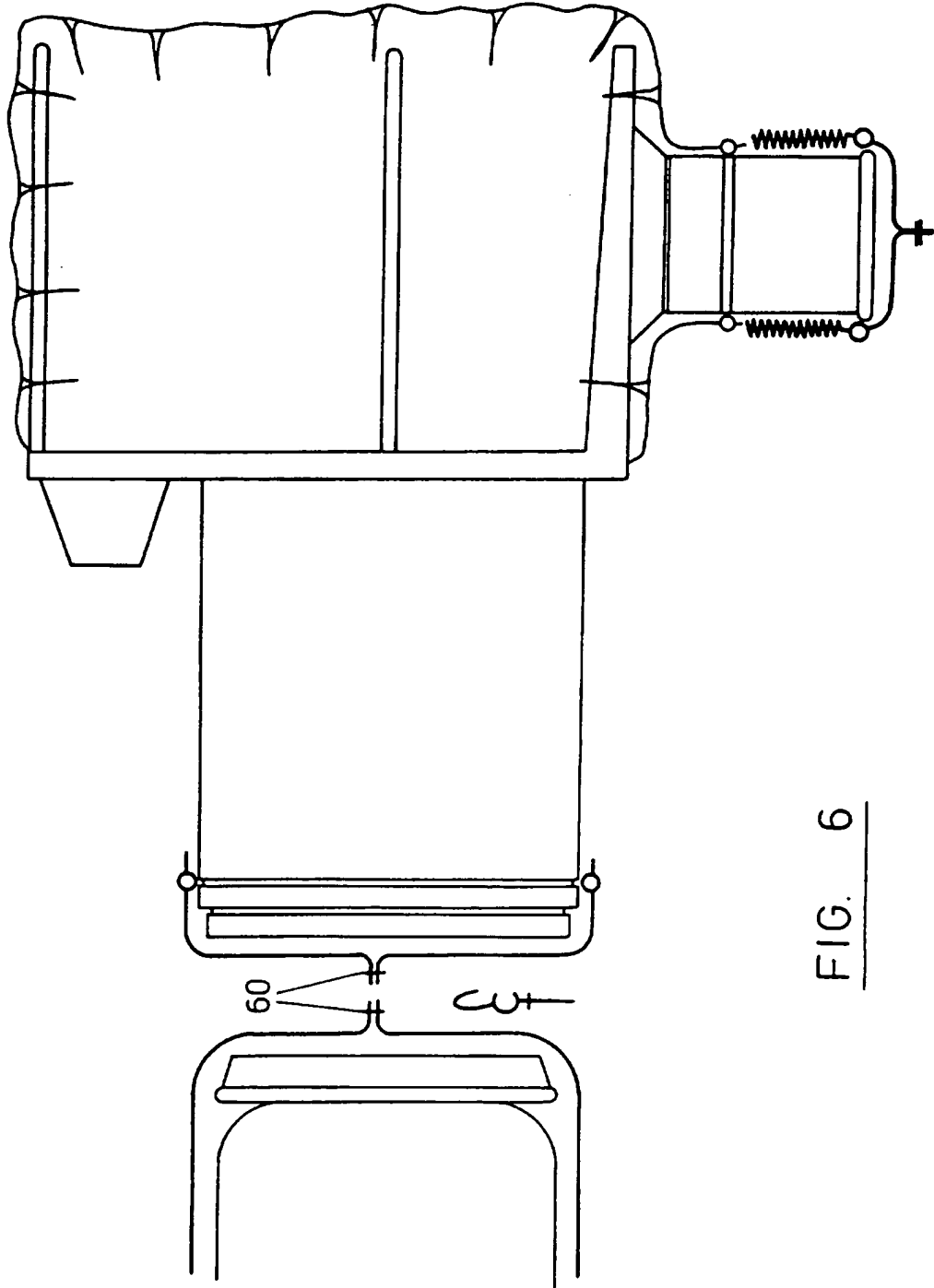


FIG. 6

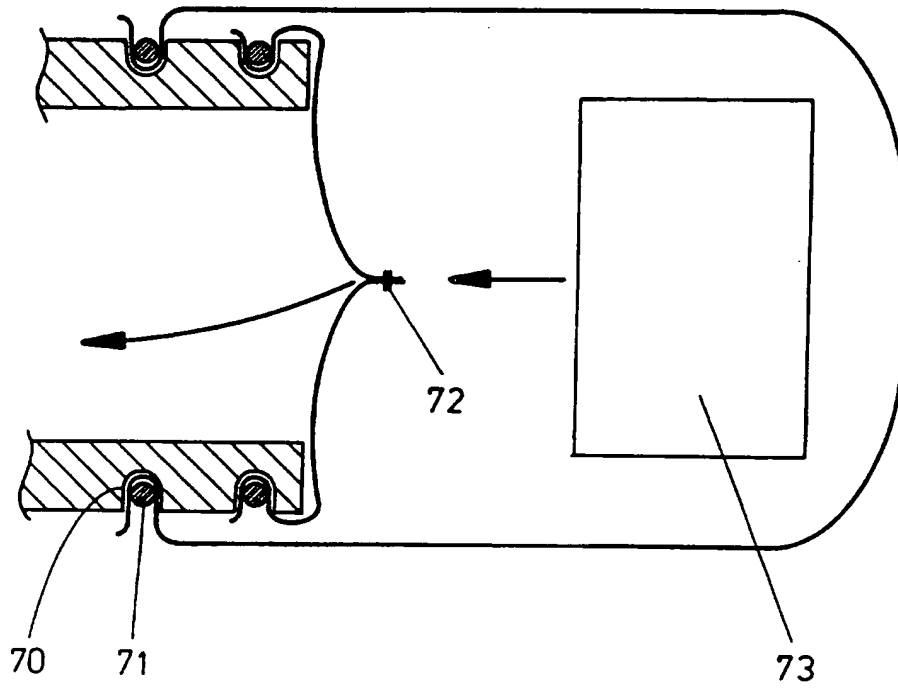


FIG. 7

GLOVE BOX

This invention relates to a glove box, and particularly, but not exclusively, to a portable and/or disposable glove box.

It is often necessary for an operator to handle highly toxic and/or pharmaceutical substances. In such situations, it is vital that the toxic substance does not come into contact with the operator, nor be released into the environment with possible catastrophic effect.

It is often necessary to handle toxic and/or pharmaceutical substances. For example, such substances are often initially dispensed into drums, and it may then be required to dispense the substance from the drum into smaller containers or to dispose of the substances by emptying the contents into other containers for eventual disposal.

It is known to carry out such operations by placing the drum containing a toxic substance within a pressurised chamber. An operator who is to handle the substance must wear a "space suit" which effectively seals him from his environment completely protecting him from his environment. In order that the operator can breathe within the space suit it is necessary to pipe air into the suit. This means that the operator can hear little if anything which is occurring in his surroundings, and if it is required to communicate with the operator it is necessary to use an intercom system.

It is known that personnel having to wear a "space suit" and work in such a pressurised chamber do not enjoy the experience. An operator in such a situation will tend to feel isolated from his surroundings.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a glove box comprising:

- a frame;

a flexible glove bag sealingly fittable over the frame to form the glove box;

the frame further comprising a drum receiving portion and an outlet.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of dispensing a substance contained within a drum by means of the glove box according to the first aspect of the present invention.

The frame defines the shape of the glove box, and once the glove bag has been sealingly fitted over the frame, a sealed area results. The sealed area has first and second apertures, the first aperture defining a drum receiving portion, and the second aperture defining an outlet.

In use, a drum will be sealingly connected to the drum receiving portion, and the outlet will be sealingly attached to collection means for collecting the contents of the drum after it has been dispensed.

The flexible glove bag is shaped to incorporate one or more gloves. The gloves allow an operator to insert one or both of his hands into the one or more gloves in order to carry out operations within the glove bag and to, for example, dispense the contents of the drum in measured amounts from the drum via the outlet into a further container whilst remaining isolated from the harmful contents of the drum.

By means of the present invention therefore it is possible for an operator to handle harmful and/or toxic substances without having to wear a "space suit" of the type described hereinabove.

It is known to use glove boxes to handle harmful and/or toxic substances. However, such known glove boxes are located in a fixed position particularly to allow for laminar air flow to be

provided into the glove box. In addition, glove boxes tend to be small typically being approximately 1m x 0.9m x 0.7m. It is not usually possible therefore to use such a glove box in conjunction with a drum which is usually approximately 0.4m in diameter and 0.6m high. This is because known glove boxes do not have, for example, a drum receiving portion. It would be necessary to place the entire drum within a glove box which would result in further operations carried out on the drum being very awkward.

The glove box of the present invention may be of any size but typically defined a cube having sides of approximately 0.5m in length.

Advantageously the frame is made from a metal such as stainless steel.

The glove box is easily portable, and the frame may be taken to a location where it is required.

The flexible glove bag may be made from any suitable material but conveniently is formed from a plastics material.

Advantageously the plastics material is transparent.

Conveniently, the glove bag is shaped to fit over four faces of the glove box. The remaining two faces of the glove box defining the drum receiving portion and the outlet.

Advantageously the two faces in which the drum receiving portion and the outlet are defined comprise sheets of metal.

Preferably, the drum receiving portion comprises a tubular member extending from a face of the glove box having an open end remote from the glove box and having a diameter compatible with the diameter of a drum to be attached to the glove box.

A drum from which a substance is to be dispensed may thus be sealingly attached to the glove box.

Conveniently, an outer lining is provided which is attachable to an outside surface of the drum receiving portion, and which is adapted to enclose entirely a drum from which a substance is to be dispensed. This means that the entire drum is isolated from its surroundings and reduces still further the chances of contamination.

Advantageously, the drum receiving portion comprises retaining means for retaining the liner in sealing contact with the drum receiving portion.

Preferably, the retaining means comprises one or more grooves formed in an outer surface of the drum receiving portion and positioned towards the open end of the drum receiving portion.

Advantageously, the drum receiving portion comprises two grooves extending circumferentially around the drum receiving portion.

A length of liner may be positioned in each of the grooves and held in place by retaining bands and rolled up or folded up in order that a long length of liner may be secured by a groove whilst still allowing a drum access to the glove box via the open end of the tubular member.

Preferably the bands are formed from an elastics material. Once the drum is empty, it must be removed from the glove box. The removal will be effected by an operator pushing the drum down the drum receiving portion towards a closed end of the lining at the open end of the tube receiving portion. This force will cause the length of lining to unroll or unravel from the groove in which it is retained.

Once the entire drum has been pushed out of the drum receiving portion, the lining may be clamped and then cut thus sealing the drum allowing the drum to be subsequently disposed of.

When it is required to insert a second drum into the glove box, the clamped end of the first lining may be pushed into the glove box, and a second drum may be positioned within a second lining which may be secured on the second groove by means of a retaining band. The second container may then be pushed into the glove box through the drum receiving portion pushing the end of the first lining into the glove box.

Preferably, a liner is attached to the outside of the outlet which liner may either be attached to a container for receiving the dispensed substance from the drum, or may be in the form of a closed tubular lining adapted to sealingly receive a substance dispensed from the drum.

Preferably, the flexible glove bag is removably attachable to the frame. This means that after a particular job has been completed, the glove bag may either be disposed of, or may be sterilised prior to being used on a subsequent job.

The invention will now be further described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of an embodiment of a glove box according to the first aspect of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic representation of the drum receiving portion of the glove box of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a schematic representation of the glove box of Figure 1 showing loading of a drum;

Figure 4 is a schematic representation of the glove box of Figure 1 showing the drum in place ready for removal of the lid;

Figure 5 is a schematic representation of the glove box of Figure 1 showing a substance being dispensed from the drum;

Figure 6 is a schematic representation of the glove box of Figure 1 showing removal of empty drum; and

Figure 7 is a schematic representation showing insertion of the second drum into the glove box.

Referring to Figure 1, a glove box according to the present invention is designated generally by the reference numeral 1. The glove box comprises a rigid frame 2 made from, for example, stainless steel. The rigid frame defines the shape of the glove box which in this case is substantially cubic. The frame has a first solid face 3 defining a drum receiving portion 4 which is substantially tubular in shape. The frame has a second face 4 defining an outlet 5 also substantially tubular shape.

The remaining four faces of the frame are open, and a flexible glove bag 6 is shaped to fit over the frame covering the open faces 7 and to be sealingly attached to the frame 2. A sealing fit between the glove bag 6 and the frame 2 is effected by means of bolts which tightly secure the bag 6 to the frame 2.

The drum receiving portion comprises one or more grooves 9 formed on the outer surface of the tube towards the open end 10.

The diameter of the drum receiving portion 4 is shaped with contours to accommodate handles on the drum to be inserted into the drum receiving portion 4.

The end 11 of the outlet 8 is also formed with one or more grooves.

Prior to a drum being inserted into the drum receiving portion 4, a tubular liner is retained on groove 9 by means of a rubber retaining ring 42. The liner may be folded over onto itself in order that a long length of lining may be held in place by a groove 9 whilst not obscuring the open end 10 of the drum receiving portion.

The drum may have an inner lining which may be held in an open position once the lid of the drum has been removed by means of catches 12 which retain corners of the inner lining to allow access to the contents of the drum.

If the liner has a closed end, the drum which is to be inserted into the glove box 1 will be placed in the liner before the liner is secured to the groove 12. Alternatively, if the liner is open ended, the liner may be positioned around the drum once it has been retained in a groove 9 on the drum receiving portion. Its open end is then clamped such that the drum is completely enclosed within the liner.

The drum may then be inserted into the drum receiving portion 4 as shown in Figure 3. The drum may be inserted into the drum receiving portion 10 whilst the glove box 1 is in the position in which the drum receiving portion is substantially horizontal.

The glove box 1 may then be rotated as shown in Figure 4 such that the drum is in a horizontal position. The liner 40 extends around the end of the drum totally enclosing the drum.

An operator may now insert one or more of his hands into the gloves formed in the glove bag 6 and dispense the substance which may be in a powdered form from the drum to the outlet.

The outlet is surrounded by a liner 52 held in place by the grooves 11 and forming a bag 53.

When all of the substance has been dispensed from the drum through the outlet into bag 53. The drum may be pushed out of the drum receiving portion 4 by the operator via the gloves in the glove bag 6. As the drum is pushed out of the drum receiving portion, the liner is unravelled due to the force exerted on the drum by the operator, and once the drum has been completely pushed out of the drum receiving portion, it is completely surrounding by lining. Throughout the unravelling process the liner is retained in groove 9 by means of band 42. The lining surrounding the drum may then be clamped with two clamps 60 and the length of liner between the clamps 60 may be cut. The drum is now totally enclosed within a sealed liner and may be appropriately disposed. The liner around the outlet may also be clamped in a similar manner allowing the substance within the bag 53 to be appropriately disposed of or otherwise used.

If it is then required to dispense the substance from a second drum, the drum from which the substance is to be dispensed may be placed within a second liner having a closed end. The open end of the second liner may then be retained in place in a second groove 70 in conjunction with a retaining rubber band 71. The clamped end 72 is pushed into the glove box 1 which allows the second drum 73 to enter the glove box.

Eventual removal of the second drum 73 will take place using the similar steps to those described hereinabove with reference to the first drum.

CLAIMS

1. A glove box comprising:
a frame;
a flexible glove bag sealingly fittable over the frame to form the glove box;
the frame further comprising a drum receiving portion and an outlet.
2. A glove box according to claim 1 further comprising a drum sealingly connectable to the drum receiving portion, and collection means sealingly attachable to the outlet for collecting the contents of the drum after it has been dispensed.
3. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims in which the flexible glove bag is shaped to incorporate one or more gloves.
4. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame is made from a metal.
5. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the glove bag is made from a plastics material.
6. A glove box according to claim 5 wherein the plastics material is transparent.
7. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the glove bag is shaped to fit over four faces of the glove box, the remaining two faces of the glove box defining the drum receiving portion and the outlet respectively.
8. A glove box according to claim 7 wherein the two remaining faces comprise sheets of metal.
9. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the drum receiving portion comprises a tubular member extending from a face of the glove box having an open end remote from the glove box and having a diameter compatible with the diameter of a drum to be attached to the glove box.

10. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein an outer lining is provided which is attachable to an outside surface of the drum receiving portion, and which is adapted to enclose entirely a drum from which a substance is to be dispensed.

11. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the drum receiving portion comprises retaining means for retaining the liner in sealing contact with the drum receiving portion.

12. A glove box according to claim 11 wherein the retaining means comprises one or more grooves formed in an outer surface of the drum receiving portion and positioned towards the open end of the drum receiving portion.

13. A glove box as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the drum receiving portion comprises two grooves extending circumferentially around the drum receiving portion.

14. A glove box according to claim 13 further comprising retaining bands positionable in each of the grooves.

15. A glove box according to claim 14 wherein the bands formed from an elastics material.

16. A glove box according to any one of the preceding claims wherein a liner is attached to the outside of the outlet which liner may either be attached to a container for receiving the dispensed substance from the drum or may be in the form of a closed tubular lining adapted to sealingly receive the substance dispensed from the drum.

17. A glove box as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the flexible glove bag is removably attachable to the frame.

18. A method of dispensing a substance contained within a drum by means of a glove box according to any one of the preceding

claims.

19. A glove box substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

20. A method of dispensing a substance substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.



The Patent Office

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Application No: GB 9521864.0
Claims searched: all

Examiner: R C Squire
Date of search: 21 November 1996

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): B4Q

Int Cl (Ed.6): B25J; G21F

Other:

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	GB 2237816A CAMBRIDGE	1,3,5,6 at least
A	US 4111753 FOLSOM	
X	US 4026286 TREXLER (see particularly column 4)	

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
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